



messing about in BOATS

Twice a Month!



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messing about in BOATS

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Commentary

BOB
HICKS

In this issue is a report from Jim Michalak of Illinois, who organized a gathering of homebuilt boat owners in July, along the lines of the event Joe Tribulato organized in southern California ("Small Boat Messabout", June 15 issue). Jim also called his a "messabout" and was pleased to find that 18 boats showed up at his grass roots gathering, some being trailered in substantial distances. The focus of both was on boats built by their owners, with heavy emphasis on Bolger designs, as these are proliferating as home builder projects with Dynamite Payson and Bernie Wolfard moving the plans out their doors.

So now I guess it's time to ask, should we try to do one of these in New England this fall? We've already had three successful boat builder shows, mainly attracting professional (or at least semi-pro) builders. And we've had the annual Small Craft Weekend at Mystic, focussed on traditional small boats. And another traditional small craft weekend is now scheduled for the end of September in Rockport, Maine. Amongst all of these the home builder did have opportunity to display his work if he chose, but I didn't see many Bolger designs.

At Mystic in June they invited people to bring "traditional" small craft, those who did need not have built their boats. At Albany in June and at Lake Champlain and Portsmouth in July, the requirement was that "builders" bring their boats. The \$40 fee at Albany kept out most amateur home builders, and apparently the impression was out that Lake Champlain was for Vermont builders, and that Strawberry Banke was for the trade. At all three, a few amateurs did bring boats.

But, now I'm thinking let's see if interest exists out there for a gathering at an appropriate place in southern New England for the amateur builders to bring their

"homebuilts", regardless of the designs. Not for a show, but for an on-the-water outing at which, like at Mystic, everyone gets to try each other's boats as well as look them over and talk about them. A no cost thing, no registration fees and all that. A place and a time, that's it. Probably on a Saturday, as it seems Sundays get committed to other things in life for many.

I have in mind an inland lake location in eastern Connecticut, Rhode Island or southeastern Massachusetts, with facilities available, protected waters, a beach and/or ramp, maybe even floats. The summer public will be long gone and such a locale can be virtually exclusively for such a gathering. Given a location, cleared with the people who manage it for our proposed gathering, I guess I'd just sort of want to announce, "a few of us are getting together with our homebuilt boats at this place on this date, come on over and join in!"

Like Joe's and Jim's gatherings, this would involve no "program" of activities, it would be ad hoc, get some home builders together somewhere with water and they can make up their own "program" as they go along. I wouldn't want to have anyone have to do paperwork, sign up people, all that sort of stuff. It works, believe me, it does.

So, what do you say, all of you who have built your own small trailerable boats? Would you enjoy such a day as the season draws to a close? At this stage, if you would, drop me a card RIGHT AWAY so I can see if it's worth troubling to line up a place to play. I'd guess late September or early October as the time. If enough interest is shown (I'd want to have at least a dozen interested) all who indicated interest would subsequently be notified of time and place well in advance. And I'll follow up in the magazine with developments as they take place.

Our Next Issue...

Will feature the three boat builder shows held this summer; the Albany Wooden Boat Festival, the Champlain Valley Small Craft Exhibition, and the Strawberry Banke Boat Builders' Day. Collectively the three shows presented the work of about 70 different builders, so I expect that's about all I'll get into the September 1st issue.

On the Cover...

"Start 'em young," says photographer Barry Donahue, and his two youngsters, Meghan and Brendan, seem to like the idea. More of Barry's beautiful photos of summer on the Cape in this issue.





Buying the Catboat

I'm really a sailor at heart and am blessed by living only five minutes from the cove where I moor my Cape Dory Typhoon daysailer. So when my wife and I bought a camp on the Belgrade Lakes in Maine, I experienced a split in my devotions between sailing on the ocean or canoeing on the lake. Although Theresa, my wife, is an experienced windsurfer, she feels uncomfortable sailing with me on the ocean; perhaps it is because I am the one who knows how to handle the sailboat, and she feels insecure not being able to control the boat or knowing how to handle an emergency (like a husband overboard).

Well, for those of us who mess about in boats, the solution was obvious; get another boat, a boat for my wife, a sailboat to be used on the lake. A sailboat that would be easy to learn to sail. The search for this next sailboat began by my looking at Sunfish and Lasers. It became very apparent to me that I possess a strong traditional sense of aesthetics when it comes to boats. A sailboat should look like my image of a sailboat.

It was about this time that I saw an ad for "Dynamite" Payson's book, "Build the Instant Catboat". I sent for the book and upon its arrival discovered two things; first, that the Catboat wouldn't be so "instant", and second that, although I may have had 60% of the skills needed, and could have faked much of the rest, I really didn't want to embark on such an extensive project with a learning curve that could spell "trouble".

So the search continued. It was fun going through the boat ads and many boatyards, talking to people about boats, attending the boat shows, looking for the perfect classical boat. As most of you realize, sometimes dreaming of a boat can be as fulfilling as the boat itself. It is a glorious process filled with promise and dreams of fair winds that is rewarding of itself.

And yet, even as I was enjoying the process, and driving Theresa nuts with my constant talk of boats, the image of that Catboat constantly came back to me.

Finally it came to me, that even though I didn't have the energy, skills or time necessary to build the Catboat, perhaps someone else would have. I called up the author of the book, Harold "Dynamite" Payson, and got to talk with his wife, Amy. Although she knew that "Dynamite" wouldn't be interested in building me that boat, she knew of a William Ransome who had built the "Bobcat" as it is called, and might still have it for sale.

I immediately contacted the Ransomes of Nag Head Harbor in North Warren, Pennsylvania. Yes, he still had the "Bobcat" and yes, he was willing to sell it.

The "Bobcat" is a design of Phil Bolger's. It was inspired by the traditional Beetle Cats of Cape Cod as built by the Concordia Boat Company. The boat is built of plywood using the "tack and tape" method, and covered with fiberglass. It amazes me how Phil

Bolger got such beautiful lines out of plywood. The "Bobcat" is a beautiful boat.

When the Ransomes trailered the boat from northwestern Pennsylvania to Portland, Maine for us to take delivery, I couldn't believe my eyes. Bill had done such a beautiful job of building her. I really felt like I was more adopting his creation of love rather than buying a boat.

The "Bobcat" is 12-1/2' in length with a 6' beam and a boom that extends well beyond the transom. She seems much larger than she is. She has a swing keel, a traditional gaff rig, and room for two or three adults. She seems tender at first, but once under sail she'll lay down only so far and then becomes very stable and stiff. She has some weather helm in a blow, and responds well when reefed. She's a great sailer with none of the sensitivities I've heard catboats are supposed to have.

Now she rides gently at our mooring just off our dock in North Pond. It is so easy to enjoy her. I just raise the sail and go, only one sheet to pull. I'll take her for many short sails during the day, in between sunbathing, swimming, reading, eating and relaxing. She fits in perfectly with our summer life style. She is just a pleasure to sail and brings back a collective subconsciousness that perhaps all sailors possess of a bygone era of wooden sailing ships. To look at her gaff rig and to hear the sounds of wood straining against wood just fills me with a sense of history.

And, yes, Theresa enjoys sailing in her, and perhaps will even learn to sail her once I give up the helm!

Richard Berman, S. Portland, ME.

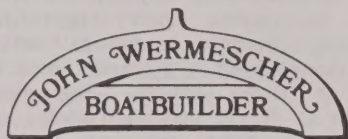
William Ransome with the beautiful "Bobcat" that he built.



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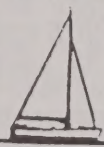
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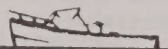
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HAPPENINGS

TUCKUP & DUCKER REGATTA

The 4th Annual Constitution Cup Regatta for Tuck Ups, Duckers, Melon Seeds and Sneakboxes takes place at the Red Dragon Canoe Club in Edgewater Park, NJ (greater Philadelphia area) on September 8, in conjunction with a traditional small craft meet. Host is the Philadelphia Maritime Museum. Advanced registrations required. (215) 925-5439 days.

MINOT LIGHT ROUNDABOUT

A rowing race from Cohasset's (MA) Sandy Beach to Minot's Light and back is scheduled for Sept. 15th, open to all types of rowing craft that can handle open ocean going. U.S.R.A. membership is NOT required. Unfavorable ocean conditions will result in use of a protected nearby course in Little Harbor. (617) 383-0586.

MIGHTY MERRIMACK ROWING RACE

The 9th Annual Mighty Merrimack Rowing Race will be held September 16 over a 3.5 mile course downstream on the Merrimack River from Amesbury to Newburyport, MA. Classes for dory, fixed and sliding seat pulling boats are offered. Sponsor is the Custom House Maritime Museum at (508) 462-8681 days.

SOUTH STREET SCHOONER REGATTA

South Street Seaport in New York city will host the 24th Annual Regatta for Schooners & Classic Yachts on Sept. 22 from its Manhattan location on the East River. Spectating will be available from the Seaport steamboat. About 35 vessels are expected to take part. (212) 669-9430.

MISERY ISLAND RACE

Henry Szostek will again host his Misery Island race for oar and paddle powered boats over a 3.5 mile course in Salem Sound starting from the island, located 1/4 mile off West Beach in Beverly Farms, MA. The date is September 23. (508) 927-1834.

1990 INDEPENDENCE CUP

The National Championship regatta for sailors with disabilities will take place in Boston on September 27-29, from the Courageous Sailing Center docks in the old Charlestown Navy Yard. The competitors will be using Rhodes 19's in the regatta. (301) 280-0464.

FALL SMALL CRAFT MEET

The Maine Traditional Small Craft & Rowing Association will host a weekend of messing about in small boats in Rockport, ME, September 29-30. All interested persons are welcome. (207) 763-3828.

MID-ATLANTIC SMALL CRAFT FESTIVAL

The Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum has scheduled its 8th Annual Fall Small Craft Festival for October 5-7 at the Museum in St. Michaels, MD, on the eastern shore. This year is also the 25th anniversary of the opening of the Museum. Preregistration is required by Sept. 21. (301) 745-2916.

RC MODEL BOAT MEETS

Radio control model boating events in September are as follows:

Sept. 3. Trigg Memorial Regatta for EC-12's, Rosemary Lake, Needham, MA. (617) 444-3330.

Sept. 3. New England Scale Ship Regatta, Rocky Woods, Medfield, MA. (508) 376-8614.

Sept. 8-9. Fort Adams Cup for EC-2's, Fort Adams, Newport, RI. (401) 847-6310.

Sept. 9. Operating Scale Regatta, Rocky Woods, Medfield, MA. (508) 376-8614.

Sept. 9. Club Series Race for 50/800, Redd's Pond, Marblehead, MA. (617) 631-0797.

Sept. 15-16. Campbell Cup Regatta for 50/800, Redd's Pond, Marblehead, MA. (617) 631-0797.

Sept. 23. George Brown Memorial Regatta for any sailboat, Loon Pond, Springfield, MA. (413) 543-6990.

Sept. 30. Gansett Special Fleet & Match Racing for EC-12's, Roger Williams Park, Providence, RI. (401) 847-6310.

MCKC OUTINGS

The Metropolitan Canoe & Kayak Club of Brooklyn, NY, has the following outings, open to any qualified interested paddlers, scheduled for September. Information at (212) 228-7793.

Sept. 2. Throgs Neck to Brooklyn Bridge Cruise.

Sept. 8. Watermelon Cruise at Camp Alvernia.

Sept. 15. City Kayak/Canoe Launch Site Cruise.

Sept. 16. Arthur Kill Cruise.

Sept. 18. Monthly Get-Together.

Sept. 29-30. Fire Island Wilderness Camping.

MCKC COURSES

The Metropolitan Canoe & Kayak Club of Brooklyn, NY, has the following courses scheduled for September, open to all interested persons. There are fees. Information at (718) 783-2306 wkdy eves. before 9 p.m.

Sept. 5, 8-9. Sea Kayaking.

Sept. 12, 15, 22-23. Fundamentals of Canoeing.

Sept. 19, 22-23. Whitewater Canoeing.

Sept. 23. Solo Canoeing.

ATLANTIC KAYAK TOURS & CLINICS

Atlantic Kayak Tours of Saugerties, NY, has the following kayak activities scheduled in September. Information at (914) 246-2187.

Sept. 9. Norwalk Islands Tour.

Sept. 10. Intermediate Kayaking/Surfing Clinic.

Sept. 11. Sandy Hook Circumnavigation.

Sept. 15. Thimble Islands Tour.

Sept. 22. Manhattan Circumnavigation.

Sept. 23. New York Harbor Intermediate Level Tour.

Sept. 29-30. Brigantine Wildlife Refuge Weekend Tour.

CCRA CANOEING

Canoeing events for September scheduled by the Connecticut Canoe Racing Association are the following:

Sept. 16. Farmington River Cruise at Farmington, CT. Dan Pelletier, (203) 237-2474.

Sept. 22. Nayaug Canoe Race on the Connecticut River at S. Glastonbury, CT. Dave Ahlgren, (203) 633-5665.

Sept. 29. 8th Annual Connecticut Poling Day Cruise on the Farmington River at the Pleasant Valley Bridge. Peter Talariski, (203) 379-5641.

BAER'S PADDLING CLINICS

Baer's River Workshop of Exeter, RI, has the following clinics scheduled for September. Information at (401) 295-0855.

Sept. 8. Introduction to Open Water Kayaking.

Sept. 9 & 16. Introduction to River Kayaking.

RICA SEA KAYAK CRUISE

The Rhode Island Canoe Association has a sea kayak outing scheduled at Sakonnet Point on September 16. (401) 336-2137.

CROPC OUTING

The Connecticut River Oar & Paddle Club has a weekend overnight outing to Selden's Island scheduled for September 8-9. (203) 382-9740.

"JESSAMYN ROSE" CRUISES

The "Jessamyn Rose" has two sea kayaking/sailing cruises on the Maine coast scheduled in September. A five day cruise will run the 6th through 10th, and a three day cruise the 14th through 16th. A sailing only cruise is scheduled for the 1st through 4th. (207) 338-4652.

CRUISE & NEWS

The Boston Harbor Associates Cruise & News outing for September focusses on progress in the Boston Harbor cleanup, the date is September 23, 1-5 p.m. (617) 330-134.

BEACH CLEANUP CALENDAR

The Center for Marine Conservation has issued its calendar of fall beach cleanup days around the nation. In 1989, 65,000 people participated and hopes are that 100,000 will do so this fall. Small boat people have a direct interest in such coastal cleanup efforts. Details for each state in our readership areas are available at the following phone numbers:

September 8. Maryland (301) 828-4520.

September 15. South Carolina (803) 727-2078. Virginia (301) 652-5964 (ocean). Washington (206) 753-5759 (Puget Sound), (206) 833-8747 (ocean).

September 22. Alabama (205) 479-2336. California (415) 543-8555. Connecticut (203) 445-3459. Florida (813) 895-2188. Georgia (912) 356-2496. Louisiana (504) 342-8148. Mississippi (601) 385-5860. New Jersey (201) 872-0111. North Carolina (919) 737-2454. Pennsylvania (814) 871-4251. Rhode Island (401) 231-6444. Texas (512) 477-6424. Virginia (804) 427-6606 (Chesapeake).

September 23. New York (718) 482-4992.

September 29. Delaware (302) 736-4506. Maine (207) 289-3261. Massachusetts (617) 727-9530. New Hampshire (603) 436-8043.

October 13. Oregon (503) 229-5406 ext. 428.

PROVIDENCE COMMUNITY BOATING

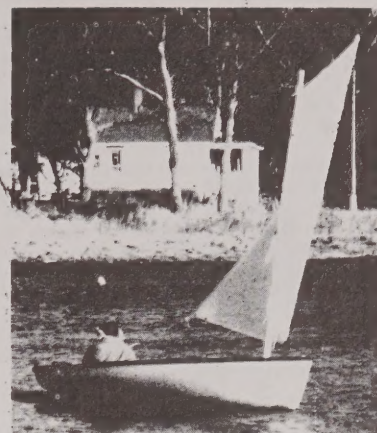
A planned Community Boating Center on the Providence, RI, waterfront, patterned after the program that has run on Boston's Charles River for years, has been started, to provide a public sailing program at affordable cost to interested Providence area citizens. The new facility will be located at India Point Park. Community Boating, (401) 861-2520.

ST. LAWRENCE SAVE THE RIVER

Another in a growing list of river preservation organizations to come to our attention is Save the River, a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving the natural resources and beauty of the St. Lawrence River. Save the River, Thousand Islands, Box 322, Clayton, NY 13624.

SOUTH SEAS VOYAGE

Here's your chance to do the South Seas on the historic schooner "Ernestina". The former "Effie M. Morrissey" of arctic fame under Capt. Bob Bartlett will weigh anchor from New Bedford, Massachusetts, on November 4th for an eight month cruise to the South Pacific. Crew positions for this cruise are open to any single men or women of good character with the \$16,500 fee available, no experience at sea is necessary. Joseph Cardozo, Ships Agent, 30 Union St., New Bedford, MA 02740, (508) 990-1493.



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WOODEN BOAT SCHOOL

September courses offered by the Wooden Boat School in Brooklin, ME, are as follows. Details at (207) 359-4651.

Sept. 2-8. Building Half Models with Eric Dow. Elements of Seamanship with John Blatchford. Cruising Boat Seamanship II with Len Hornick.

Sept. 2-15. Wooden Boat Repair Methods with Skip Green.

Sept. 9-15. Celestial Navigation with Ben Ellison. Elements of Seamanship II with John Blatchford. Cruising Boat Seamanship II with Len Hornick.

Sept. 9-22. Building the Haven 12-1/2 with Eric Dow.

Sept. 16-22. Building the Nutshell Pram kit with Rich Hilsinger. Drawing & Painting with Carol Seebold. Coastwise Navigation with John Blatchford.

Sept. 23-29. Lofting with Greg Rossel. Stitch & Glue Boatbuilding with Sam Devlin. Iceboat Construction with Joe Norton. Fiberglass Engineering & Surveying with Bruce Pfund and Paul Coble.

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BUDGET BOAT BUILDING COURSE

The fall course on building the "Jawbone" kayak, Zu Freeman's budget small boat project for anyone who ever thought he'd like to try building a boat is scheduled to begin September 15th at Middlesex Community College in Burlington, MA. The 8 week course costs \$69. (617) 272-3331 or (617) 438-0835.

NORTHWEST BOAT SHOWS

Three major boat shows for wooden and classic boats are scheduled in the Pacific northwest in September.

Sept. 1-2. Classic Boat Show, Victoria, BC, Canada.

Sept. 7-9. Port Townsend Wooden Boat Festival, Port Townsend, WA.

Sept. 15-16. 13th Annual Wooden Boat Show, Portland, OR.

"COASTING"

Sailor/writer David Buckman, who in the past did some articles for us on sailing his camper/cruiser modified Lightning now has undertaken publication of a new special interest magazine about cruising under sail on the Maine, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia coasts. "Coasting" is a wide format magazine, 11" wide x 8-1/2" high, which permits spectacular use of his photographs of these coasts. Cruising details, historical backgrounds, inspirational photographs are the meat of the new periodical, with no advertising. David will send you a sample copy of his introductory issue on request, subscription is \$15 for a six issue, bi-monthly schedule. "Coasting", 31 Ridgewood Ave., Gilford, NH 03246, (603) 524-7107. David was off in mid-July on a 5 week cruise to those "northwaters" to gather material for later issues, for as he said, "somebody has to do it".

PADDLING NEWS

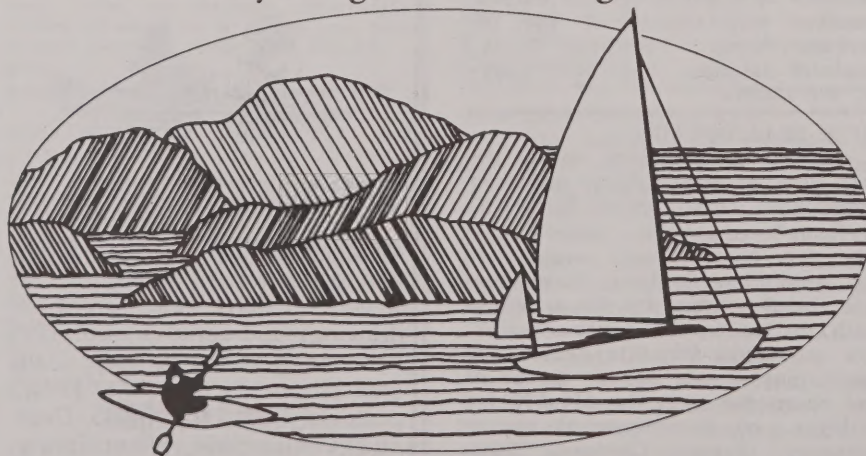
Readers involved in canoeing or kayaking on rivers might be interested in a quarterly publication which compiles news of interest from paddling club newsletters from all over the country. "Confluence" costs \$12 a year (four issues), from 1343 N. Portage, Palatine, IL 60067.

"WATER WAYS"

A new publication focussed on New York state's waterfronts, "Water Ways" is a tabloid bi-monthly newspaper of interest to anyone enjoying small boating on the state's waters, ocean, rivers or lakes. Overall focus is on development and the environment, both of which impact upon small boat access and opportunities. They'll send you a sample copy on request. North River Communications, P.O. Box 11, Croton, NY 10520.

JESSAMYN ROSE

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Sailing on the Pikmeer

Q. What small European country has a long seafaring tradition with a love of sail that is nowadays reflected in the fact that there are many more sailboats than motor vessels, and the motorboats that do exist tend to be of the sensible slow moving variety rather than our ubiquitous wake producing speedboats? Where do you find a big fleet of wooden gaff rigged boats from dinghies to large leeboard sailing barges mostly over one-hundred years old? Where do they have miles of windblown waterways from narrow canals to the open sea?

A. The Netherlands, with its great variety of waters from placid drainage canals through shallow reedbound inland lakes, to the vast manmade IJsselmeer and on to the formidable North Sea.

I was fortunate enough to be over there in the last part of May, 1990, with my wife, camping with my mother and new step-father. During our travels around North Holland, the province to the north of Amsterdam known for its cheeses, windmills and postcard views of old Holland, I was amazed at the vast flotilla of diverse craft from 5' lapstrake mini-prams to the huge bluff-bowed sailing barges seemingly straight out of old Dutch seascapes.

I was mainly a shorebound observer of the wonderful array of boats, but towards the end of our stay I was able to rent a daysailer when, after a memorable drive across the great dam that forms the IJsselmeer out of what was once the Zuiderzee, we arrived at the Friesland town of Grouw, which sits on a boat-covered lake, the Pikmeer, well known locally as a sailing center and home to a large fleet of

B.M. class daysailers.

Designed by a butcher in the 1930's to be built by amateurs, this strip-planked, gaff rigged, 30" draft, low freeboard lake boat with a sail area of 16 meters, has grown to over 15,000 built with 4,000 prime specimens being raced regularly today. My hired craft was somewhat less than prime, bearing the scars of many a novice sailing initiation over a long hard life. "Sparrow" leaked a little and the mainsail was in its dotage, but we had a fun and spirited sail in puffs up to 25 knots on several lakes linked by wide canals covered with hundreds of other mostly gaff-rigged wooden sailing vessels; a fleet of tiny Optimist prams being raced by school children to a good dozen of the big (80' to 100') chartered leeboard sailing barges creaming along with crowds of partying people on deck. It was interesting to note the reefing method on the monster mainsails, which consisted of an open triangle where boom met mast made by rolling up the sail from the tack. It was a trifle disconcerting to be sailing on a 6' deep lake and look around to find one of these behemoths bearing down on us, but truly a sight to behold.

The majority of the craft, however, were around our 6 meter (19') length. Some, battered family cruisers out for a picnic jaunt with three generations and the dog aboard, others immaculately bright-finished beauties racing with the crew out on trapeze, a modern device seemingly a little at odds with the gaff up above, but why not?

The wind increased as the morning drew on and our windward return was marked by whitecaps,

flying spray, and a tear in the jib which showed no signs of getting smaller. So back to the dock we went for lunch, a sail change, and to drop off my wife, who had had enough heavy weather sailing.

I reefed the main all the way, but still needed to employ the "fisherman's reef" any time I went upwind during my afternoon's solo sail. There were various classes racing and I was witness to several capsizes and one slow motion dismasting caused by an unruly spinaker. On my return at the end of the day, I was told that this had been an unusually windy day for the time of year, and that 10 to 15 knots was the norm for summer on these inland lakes.

My sailing area was confined by my allotted time, but the map showed many more interconnected lakes. My boat had a flat floor suitable for sleeping, a heavy-duty cockpit tent, and numerous storage lockers. My request for a daysail was considered unusual as these boats are generally rented for at least a weekend, and we met one German couple docking from a two week birdwatching camp-cruise.

Anyone interested in such a sailing vacation in Holland can call the English-speaking owner, Mr. Bartels, at 05662-38110; or write Grouw Botenverhuurbedrijf, Gevesigd op Recreatieoord Yn e' lyte, Postbus 22,9000, AA Grouw, The Netherlands.

Now back home, I'm looking forward to some summer trips aboard our home built Bolger "Micro" and Redmond "Whisp", a 15' yacht with a 16' tender. Both would fit right into the Dutch sailing scene.

Martin Stevens, Black Mountain, NC.

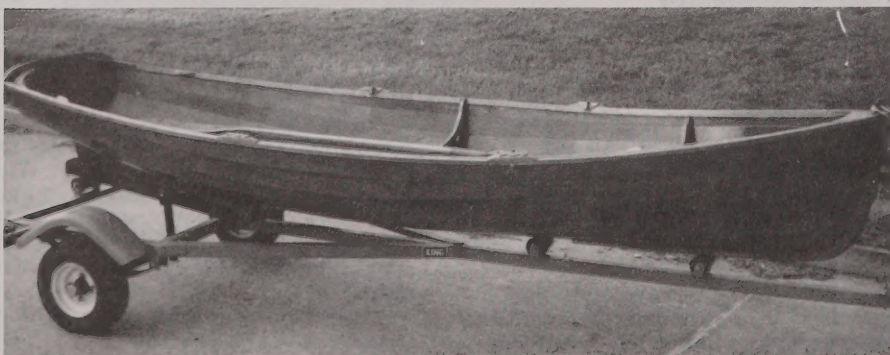


Midwest Homebuilt Messabout

Our first Midwest Homebuilt Boat Messabout in late June at Rend Lake in southern Illinois was a great success with 17 boats turning up and who knows how many people.

When I arrived on Friday afternoon, I found Bob and Sue Archibald already using their unpainted, but hopefully otherwise completed, Micro as a camping trailer. Also there was Bob Bollinger who had come all the way from Oklahoma City! The 30 to 40 knot winds blowing meant no sailing, so we adjourned to the nearby restaurant to discuss boats and what tomorrow might bring. I made camp that evening and installed earplugs to help me fall asleep in my wildly flapping tent. Winds gusted to 60 mph in St. Louis that night.

Top photo: Three flat-bottomed cruisers, all about the same weight, but so different: "Otter", "Birdwatcher", "Micro". Below: Paul Connelly's "Acorn".



Saturday morning the troops began to arrive. Barry Bylls brought his Rhodes Woodpussy and John McDaniel had a Luger 16, both have homebuilt projects at home yet to complete. Paul Connelly arrived from Milwaukee with a beautiful Acorn skiff. Micro builder Tom Brady and Birdwatcher builder Marc Smith arrived, along with Jim Boyer and a Bolger Nymph and Jim Huxford with a Bolger Otter. Bobcat builder George Haycraft towed in a factory-built Mudhen. I was delighted for I have skulked around hereabouts alone building boats at home, and it was great to now meet others who had been doing the same. We toured around looking over each other's boats while we hoped the still strong winds would ease off a bit.

It blew 20 to 30 knots much of Saturday, Rend Lake was a sea of whitecaps. George Haycraft finally grew impatient enough to tie a double reef in his Mudhen sail and went out and did it. I went with him. It was rough, but safe, I think. Motoring in later, George planned to put the Mudhen away because "it was blowing a bunch", only to find his wife ashore had arranged for him to give rides to other folks. With the ice thus broken, all the skiff owners unlimbered and rowed and paddled in the protected cove, taking turns in each other's boats. Eventually the sailors tied in all their reefs and had a go too.

While these earlier arrivals were coming to grips with the wind conditions, others continued to show up. John Sellers arrived from Ohio with a Teal; Dan Knoedler trailered in a Dovekie; and Kurt Hammes of Twin Rivers Boatworks in St. Charles, Missouri, brought in a fleet of five boats; a Bobcat, a Whitehall, a Marples skiff, and two tortured plywood canoes. All were built to perfection.

Later when the blow let up some, I was suckered into shaking out the reef in my Birdwatcher. While tacking out of the cove, I missed stays and the wind pinned me into a reed thicket. We furled the sail, got out the oars, and my crew began telling me about Cleopatra's Barge paddling through the reeds on the Nile.

A tour around the campground that evening revealed a pleasant gathering of boats and boaters. The campground owner had directed us to the "free" sites in the hope our presence there would keep out troublesome local rowdies. It worked, the rowdies left. A candlelit bull session got going at John McDaniels' site, and just when things were running down, Bob Russell arrived in the dark from Michigan with fresh Super Brick plans and rekindled the fire. I don't know when it ended, I zonked out at midnight.

Sunday morning a perfect sharpie breeze was blowing. I tacked the Birdwatcher out of the cove to find the Woodpussy and Dovekie frolicking, and met a nice Indiana family in two small sailboats who were messing about with us and didn't even know it. I joined them, and the Otter joined me. In the launch cove I could see the Micro tacking out looking for all the world like a miniature Spanish galleon.

The Archibald's Micro was purchased from Pat Giordano through an ad in "Messing About in Boats" a year ago, about half completed. I dawdled with it this past winter to finish the second half and get it ready to sail. Now it's left to Bob and Sue to paint it and finish the third half. The boat was totally untried until Saturday. On Sunday he tacked out onto the lake without an auxiliary motor and with no less than seven people on board, looking fast and able. My guess is they clicked off 6 miles in an hour and a half loaded thusly.

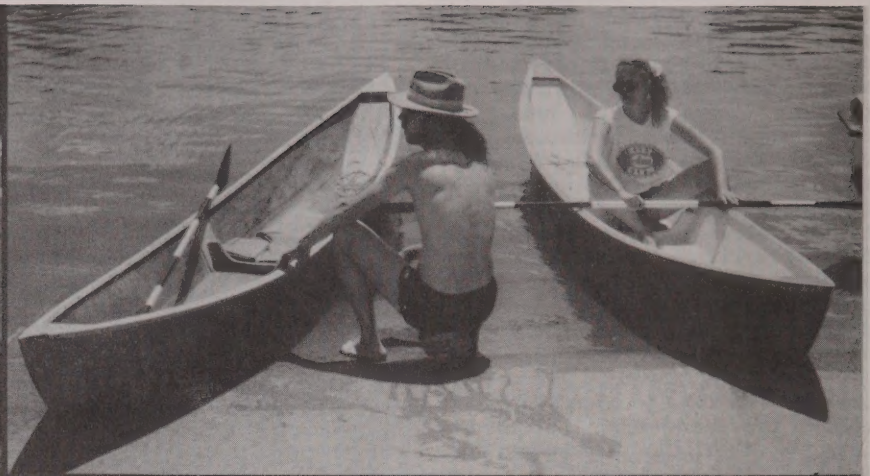
By noon the wind was dropping and many had long drives home to make, so most packed up and departed early afternoon. Not me, I was again drawn out onto the lake for one more sail, but then the wind gave out completely and we rowed Birdwatcher home, again to the crew's retelling of the tale of Cleopatra's barge on the Nile.

I want very much to thank all the wonderful people who came to this first attempt at such a gathering here in the heartland. As organizer, all I really did was pick a place and date and tried to get the word out. Those who came made it happen. We'll have more, but next time I promise to not choose the same weekend as the nearby "Street Machine Nationals". I promise!

Jim Michalak, 118 E. Randle St., Lebanon, IL 62254.



From the top: Jim Huxford cruises along in his "Otter". Kurt Hammes "Bobcat" and "Whitehall", beautifully finished boats.



Across the top: Jim Boyer's "Nymph"; Kurt Hammes' Glen L "Rob Roys". Across the bottom: Bob and Sue Archibald's "Micro". Jim Michalak's "Birdwatcher".

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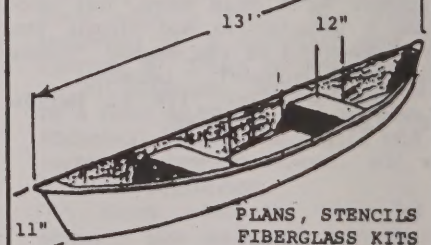
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My father Arthur Shurcliff (bow) and I in my first double kayak, 17'x32", named "Scotchman" because it never tipped.

Some Very Picturesque Kayaks

In 1888, my father, Arthur A. Shurcliff (then 18), visited Harvard University's Peabody Museum in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and was delighted by the eskimo kayaks exhibited there. He decided to try to make one for himself. He set to work in his parent's home on West Cedar St. on Beacon Hill in Boston, and made quick progress. He covered the lightweight frame he constructed with 1/8" thick mahogany veneer, secured with copper rivets. This hull he then covered with canvas and then painted it. This first kayak was about 14' long and weighed about 25 pounds. He made a number of short trips on the Charles River, taking along camping equipment, including a tiny 5 pound sheet metal cooking stove.

Later, while employed as landscape architect and city planner for the Rockefeller project, Colonial Williamsburg, he found time to build more kayaks at his summer home on Argilla Road in Ipswich, Massachusetts. I was by then old enough to give him some help. These later kayaks used no wooden sheathing, no veneer. The frame, of knot-free spruce bought from a ladder manufacturer, was covered with canvas. The paint was "airplane dope" routinely used on the cloth covered wings of light airplanes, and it made the canvas watertight and very taut. And it dried in 15 minutes!

These kayaks, with their long and high rakish bows, were very picturesque. They were long, about

17', and light, about 30 pounds. But I found them unsatisfactory on windy days; the lateral push of the wind on the bow made it hard to hold a cross-wind course. Also, there was no proper seat, and my rear end soon became numbed. Additionally, these kayaks were so wide that one had to keep one's elbows raised to avoid having the paddle hit the gunwales. This was a very tiring position to maintain.

My father later in his life fitted one of his kayaks with a small sail. When he was 70 years old he enjoyed sailing more than paddling. Two of his kayaks still exist, covered now with over 50 years of dust.

In about 1931 at Ipswich, with the help of my youngest sister, Alice, I designed and built a 17' long double kayak that was light and comfortable, but proved to be unnecessarily wide at about 32". One could even stand up in it without capsizing. Absurd! It was disappointingly slow. Result, I sold it to a neighbor. He paid me \$35 for it, for which price I recanvassed and repainted it and hand-made two new double paddles. A hard way to make money.

I had learned by now that a kayak could be much more slender, much faster, and yet be stable. I set to work and designed what was perhaps the longest and fastest single kayak ever built; 23' long, 23" beam. I purchased the necessary strips of knot-free spruce, the canvas, the airplane dope, brass

screws and copper rivets. My father helped me build it, and what a pace we hit. No pauses. While performing one task we planned and debated the next one. Everything went together fast. We began at 8 a.m. on a Friday and put the finished kayak into Castle Neck Creek at noon on Saturday.

This first tryout revealed poor stability. Too tippy. Why? Two reasons were revealed; the keel was absolutely straight and the seat region was wide enough so that its occupant's rear end was free to jiggle right or left an inch or two. How well could you ski if there was a half-inch of play inside your ski boots? We carried the kayak back to the shop, removed the canvas, corrected both troubles, re-applied the canvas, and put it back into the water 24 hours later. Success now, stability.

How did we correct the design deficiencies? First, we arranged the keel to be two inches lower amidships than at either end. This meant that the occupant's center of gravity was lowered by an inch or more. Second, we installed springy longitudinal strips that "hugged" the occupant's hips, preventing any lateral motion. A person with extra-wide hips literally could not fit into the kayak.

This kayak we named "Photon". It drew only 2.5" and was extremely fast, so fast that I had to discard my usual double-bladed paddles and make extra long ones. The decking sloped downwards to-



From the top: My father in his first eskimo kayak. I prepare to test my 23' solo "Proton" in 1933. Another shot of me in "Proton".

wards the bow and stern, so the wind could get very little grip on it. A stiff crosswind had little effect.

A humorous trick I performed with this kayak was to take it to the Ipswich River just upstream of the 5' high Willowdale Dam, aim it upstream, and appear to fall asleep. As the kayak drifted backwards towards the dam, people standing on shore became convinced I would soon plunge over the dam. Automobiles passing by would stop in horror to watch the impending tragedy. Soon the rearmost 4 or 5 feet of the kayak would project out

over the dam in mid-air. I would then spring to life at the last moment, paddle a few strokes forward, and then resume my "nap"!

Another inadvertent bit of humor this long kayak provided for me occurred one time as I was transporting it atop my Ford car. As I pulled up to stop at a red light behind a car that had a rumble seat, I noted a boy and girl were seated in the rumble seat. When I came to a stop, the bow of my kayak overhung the young couple and steadily began dripping water upon them. I quickly backed up while I could.

In 1934 I designed and built what may be the world's narrowest kayak, 18" wide overall, 18' long. I used every trick I had learned by then to maximize stability and barely succeeded. I also used many of my tricks to provide comfort. I modified the main cross structure so that it also served as a 20" high form fitting backrest and I made a long narrow form fitting seat of nearly zero thickness so that my center of gravity would remain low. I also provided comfortable heel rests.

This kayak, named "Electron" was my greatest success. It was so narrow and low that I paddled with elbows completely relaxed, close to my body. It was so low at bow and stern as to catch almost no wind. It was so slender that it was very fast. It was so comfortable that I could paddle almost indefinitely without tiring. One of my first trips was from Ipswich out to, and around, Cape Ann, returning via Gloucester harbor and the Annisquam River, Wingershiek Beach and Castle Neck Creek; 45 miles in all, done non-stop in nine hours.

I discovered a remarkable fact about very narrow kayaks. Even if I paddled parallel to 6' high breaking waves and a great comber broke right on top of me, I did not tip over. The kayak was so narrow that the wave could get no "grip" on it, could exert little torque. I could continue paddling straight ahead unscathed. The lap robe prevented any water from entering the boat. With my wider kayaks, this could not be done, the breaking wave parallel to the kayak, inevitably capsized it.

Once paddling off Long Beach, New Jersey, on a rough and windy day, I had the curious experience of "surfboarding" in too successfully. As the wave rushed toward the shore gaining height, I managed to keep the kayak balanced on its crest, coasting along at high speed. At the last moment, with the wave, now resembling a 7' high vertical wall, the kayak fell forward, the bow plunged down into the calm water ahead of the crest and struck bottom. The stern was thrown up and over, the kayak and I turned a complete end-over-end somersault.

One problem I never licked was getting rid of sand that washed into the kayak. I had made no provision for access to the bow and stern interiors. If the problem had become bad enough, I suppose I could have washed it out with a garden hose.

Pleased with the "Electron" design, I set to work designing a similar kayak for two, the "Deuteron". This craft was 25' long, 19.5" wide overall. It too was so narrow that we could paddle with elbows relaxed and it too was low at bow and stern to minimize windage. With two strong men paddling, or-



Left: My father heads out to try "Photon". Right: My 1931 17' double before covering.

dinary length double paddles could hardly keep up so I again built extra-long, extra-light paddles.

I took many long trips in this kayak, including a non-stop trip from Haverhill to Essex, Massachusetts; a trip along the Maine coast near Kittery, and a 4-hour trip from Ipswich to Manchester, Massachusetts. Another humorous adventure occurred off Wingaershieck Beach in Gloucester, Massachusetts, in rough weather. A friend paddled bow and I paddled stern. We sped shoreward amidst moderately high waves, travelling along with them. On one occasion we just kept up with a 4' high wave which peaked about where my partner sat. He was completely underwater while I con-

tinued to enjoy the air. Because the kayak and wave travelled on at the same speed, it began to look as if my partner would never be able to breath again. Fortunately the wave soon broke and my partner emerged from the foam.

My last memorable trip in this kayak was in 1938, a circumnavigation of Manhattan Island on the hottest day of that summer. We started from an abandoned ferry slip near Jersey City, crossed to the Battery at the southern tip of Manhattan, zoomed up the East River on a swift following tide making a city block every 17 seconds. We were non-plussed to find the current in the Harlem River to be squarely against us. To make any

progress at all, we had to adopt a racing stroke, very tiring after a few miles. We lost so much time in the Harlem River that when we arrived in the Hudson we also hit the tide wrong, and had to battle fatigue and thirst to again reach the ferry slip, 28 miles and 7 hours after we began.

Well, these kayaks are no more, the last one withered away about 25 years ago. Today at 81 I am retired from my career as a physicist at Harvard. The designs would no doubt today be considered obsolete, but I am still quite proud of what my father and I evolved and enjoyed those many long years ago.

William Shurcliff, Cambridge, MA

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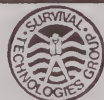
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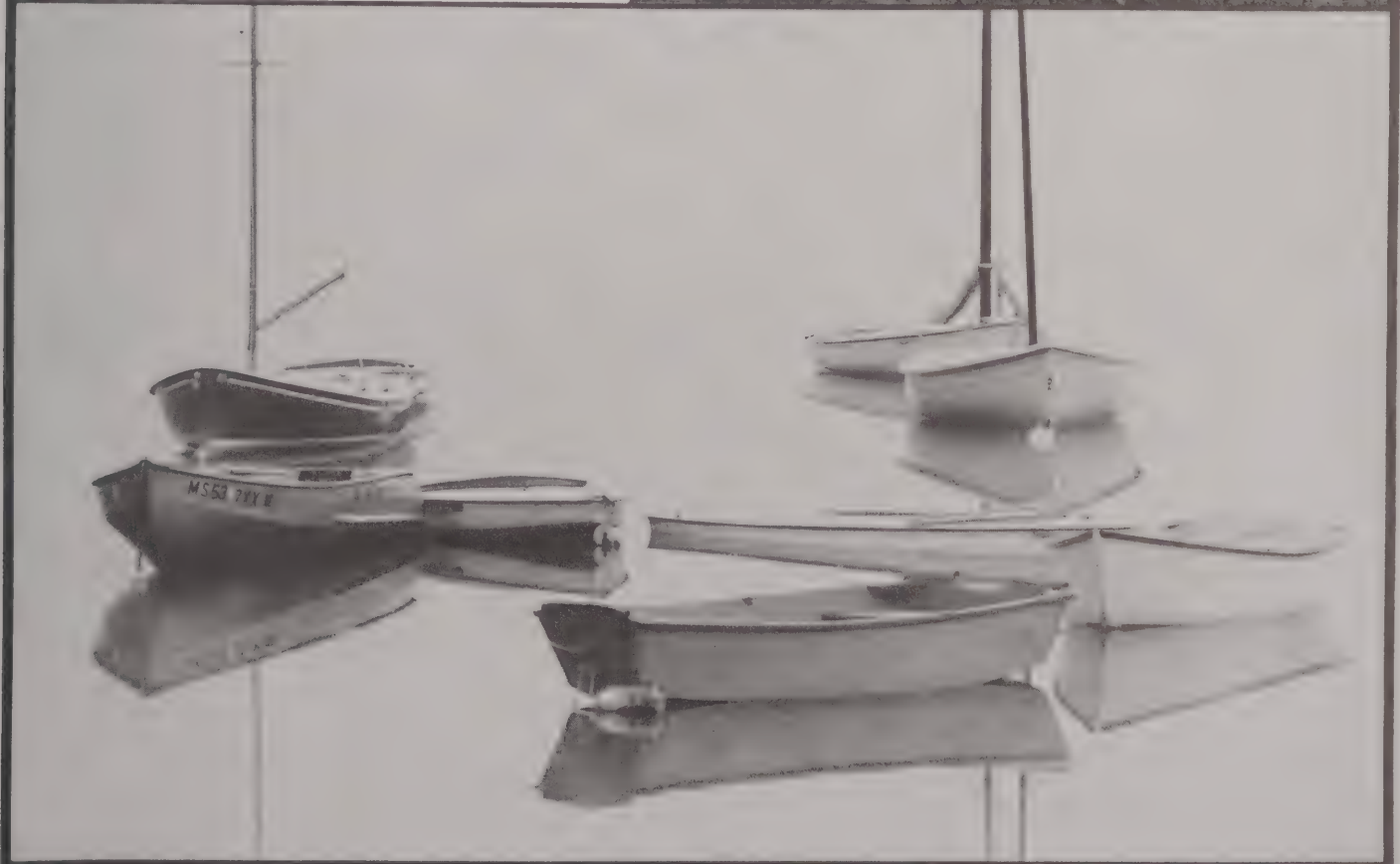


Above. Frost Fish Cove in Orleans. Below: Checking the mooring in the river in Orleans. Centerspread overleaf: Little Pleasant Bay in Orleans.





Above left: On Town Cove in Orleans. Above right: Near Arey's Pond in Orleans. Below: Sheep Pond in Brewster.







Your reluctant river runner (see "Tubing down the James." March 1, 1989) has again ventured onto the water in an unseaworthy craft powered by paddle, this time a 16-foot double-ended piece of metal painted bright yellow, a cheerful if somewhat tinny vessel which my wife Barbara and I rented at \$8.00 for half a day. The comical crew of brown pelicans basking on the dock took no notice of us as we gingerly stepped around them and launched our tin banana onto the cove. We were about a drive and a long iron from the narrow bridge that joins lovely Sanibel and Captiva Islands, just off the Gulf coast near Fort Myers, Florida. As we launched it, the canoe grated like old-fashioned chalk scraping a blackboard. From the bow Barbara bid adieu to the pelicans who seemed as self-satisfied as pensioners on salary.

Once we were afloat, my instincts were to head for open water. With the tide running out, paddling the not alarmingly tender craft was an easy down-hill ride. When we reached Blind Pass, common sense suggested a right turn toward Pine Island Sound rather than a left under the bridge and out onto the gulf, since the bridge was under repair and the navigable pass beneath it was restricted to a narrow rip.

We worked our way along the mangroves and weedy water adjacent to the Sanibel shore, with me trying to keep track of the markers we passed and to get a clear idea of the mudflats and shoals. My vague objective was to paddle far enough off shore for a panoramic view of the north end of Sanibel Island. After an hour or so of leisurely paddling, it began to occur to me that there was a lot of water out there. Though I inevitably play the role of Captain Confidence to Barb's Cautious Crew, I suggested we come about and head for more sheltered water, and maybe check out the bayou we had passed coming out. I wanted this to be a trouble-free and pleasant passage for Barbara because I had some imprecise and unannounced plans to do some more messing about in boats during our January week and a half on Sanibel Island.

There are not many things Bobbi enjoys more than salt air, a sandy beach, and a sea breeze. Even in New England weather she likes being aboard our Nimble 20 at its mooring in Spicer's Marina. She loves watching the sunset, and later the harbor lights and the night sky from the cockpit, or being rocked to sleep by the gentle billow and tug of the sea. There are few things away from home as pleasant for her as breakfast and coffee cooked on the Origo two-burner in the damp, salty morning air. Aboard our little yawl Barbara is as happy as a cat on a couch—until I suggest we go for a sail. Five yards from the mooring the tranquil waters become fraught with peril, a gauntlet of shoals and



Paddling Through the Mangroves

rocks. If the wind rises a notch, its sound becomes the roar of sea monsters and the few whitecaps become Jonah's whales about to swallow up our little boat. While the Honda is humming she is sure the genie inside it is waiting for a critical moment to conk out on us; if we are breezing along under sail, her eyes are alert for squalls on the horizon and power boats bent on running us down. Like an good friend of mine who bought a boat he is afraid of, Barbara is always looking for a reason not to go out on the water, even in a flat calm on a balmy Florida morning.

"Don't you think we should wait till there's water in the cove?" she had asked earlier that morning, as we were walking around to Blind Pass Rental just across the inlet from our cottage.

"No, no—low tide is the best time to set out."

"Why so?"

"The channel is obvious, and the tide will be fair coming back," I replied in my Captain Confidence voice.

"Maybe so. But you wouldn't be saying that if it were high tide, would you?"

It was a point well taken. I generally consider any condition of wind, weather, and water short of a full gale the very best to go for a sail. But Barbara had to admit that by her standards there has never been a day without some condition

that made weighing anchor a risky venture. The mate who rented us the canoe was a master at reassuring the dubious. After giving us a xerox of a local chart and suggesting routes, he calmly added that if we got in any trouble or fell overboard, there should be no problem, since we'd be able to walk to shore. Of course, I had ignored his suggestions and taken us out to the Blind Pass channel. As soon as we came about, I realized we had come a considerable distance, and that on the trip back the wind, which seemed to have freshened, as well as the tide would be against us. A bit of a chop had developed as well, and out of the corner of my eye I noticed an occasional whitecap.

The view was disappointing. Mangrove islands, like the Cape Cod dunes, are impressive up close, but monotonous from off shore. I was pleased to notice that someone had affixed cheerful, fish-shaped day markers to the seaward side of the piles marking the channel. "Oh, look," Barbara cried, gesturing aloft. In the offing were a pair of snowy-white pelicans gliding gracefully shoreward, aristocratic cousins of the welcoming committee on the dock. For about ten minutes the canoe seemed to make no headway at all, even though I had increased my stroke and was giving it all I had. Then we began to make some progress, and after what seemed a long haul we made our way around a point and into

protected water. When Barbara suggested we beach the canoe to stretch our legs, I didn't give her an argument since I was arm-weary but unwilling to admit it.

After respite at the edge of a shady mangrove marsh, which was surprisingly spooky, we paddled leisurely up the bayou in less than a foot of weedy water. One of the unexpected pleasures of paddling in these shoal Florida waters, I discovered, was the unfolding view beneath the surface, with the undulating sea growth, lumpy shapes, glittering shells, and an occasional small fry suspended in the watery world. Through this distorting medium even a rusty Budweiser can become a rich and strange discovery. Along both sides of the bayou there were docks every hundred yards or so, most of them with power boats or runabouts hauled out of the water and suspended from davits. Every once in a while part of a house hove into sight, what the real estate agents referred to as *estates*, but really nothing as pretentious as that. Sitting pretty at one of the docks was a graceful, fiberglass sloop, about a 22 footer, whose lines I did not recognize. Not a sound interrupted the serenity of this strangely bleak sojourn except the rhythmic slurp of our paddles. The silence suggested that something was missing. When we ran out of water and were about to turn around, I realized what was lacking; the chronic complaints of the leather-eyed gulls who believe they own all of Fishers Island Sound.

The tide was still out when we returned to our cove, but the water was slack. Though I didn't mention it to Barbara, I had had enough messing about for the time being. I was pleased that the morning had passed so leisurely and that there would be no question of our venturing into a mangrove trail today. One of the routes the mate who rented us the canoe had suggested was a winding trail through the mangroves on Buck Key. "Just keep going," he had said. "You think you're lost and going around in circles, but you'll come out right here," he added, marking the trail on the chart. Sailing, rowing, paddling on the water is one thing, I said to myself; inching through a tropical swamp, something else again. Besides, mangroves are gloomy, spooky places. The crew of comical pelicans could have been stuffed for all the attention they paid us as the yellow canoe scraped the beach again right next to their sun deck.

During the next few days, while walking the Captiva beach, which we had almost to ourselves at that time of year, I checked out the Tween Waters Marina, where Hobie Cats and Sunfish were available at \$40.00 for half a day. Our first boat had been a Sunfish, and Bobbi doubtless would have had no objections to tacking about in light airs close to shore.

In my heart of hearts I had always wanted to try out a small catamaran, and I could see myself assuring her that the cat was considerably more stable than the Sunfish. But such sailing would be available at almost any lake; there was nothing about it especially suited to what I thought of as a tropical adventure. My mind kept on returning to the winding trail through the mangroves on Buck Key. Such a trek would be venturesome and even scary. And I remembered what I had not quite admitted to myself about the earlier trip in the yellow canoe: that I had made sure there would not be time to venture into the spidery, spooky world of the mangroves.

All my calculations were rendered moot one evening when Barbara found an item in the freebie paper for tourists our hosts provided. "Do you know where Tarpon Bay is?" she asked.

"Not far from the shopping center."

"Well, there's a canoe trail there. Interested?"

My first instinct, looking at the article over her shoulder, was to dismiss the idea offhand, as something for *tourists*. One of my sillier pretensions is never or at least hardly ever to do the things tourists do and to try as much as possible to blend in with the natives. This affectation is an interesting game to play in many situations, but it becomes absurd in the Florida vacation spots, where one is either a tourist or in the business of providing services for them. The notice was illustrated with a map of the Commodore Creek Canoe Trail, which wended its way from Tarpon Bay to Mullet Lake through what could be none other than a mangrove swamp. "Sure," I said. "Why don't we check it out tomorrow?"

The canoe trail is a side show of the Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge, whose main attraction, a drive-through bird sanctuary, we had already taken in. I had found the various species of tourists with their exotic costumes and cameras more interesting than the tribes of waterbirds afloat in the shallows, since the birds had become a familiar sight every morning and evening from the porch of our cottage. I had even learned to distinguish the different sorts of egrets and herons, as well as the roseate spoonbill and the anhinga, which despite its fancy name looks and acts like a cormorant. The marina at Tarpon Bay had the feel of a summer camp or park: the employees at the store which sold T shirts and other memorabilia and at the canoe launch were college age kids. The aluminum canoes were \$10.00 for the first hour, with a \$2.00 surcharge for useless plastic seat cushions. If we left right away, we were told, we might be able to make it through the trail before the falling tide made it impassable.

Paddling from the launch to the trail entrance, we skirted an elongated mudflat which was rich with an abundance of sea life similar to what can be found in New England salt marshes. I was dawdling over a prospect of hermit crabs and whelks, when Barbara and I switched roles. It was I the impatient one who was in no hurry and Barbara the advocate of leisurely observation who was urging us on to the canoe trail!

Turning into the Commodore Creek Canoe Trail from Tarpon Bay was like entering another world, and I half expected a Dantesque admonition to be inscribed on the entrance sign. From the long airy prospect of the jade-green bay, with its high sky and shimmering sunlight, you found yourself almost instantly enclosed in gloomy, tunnel-like maze of red mangroves, with their dark glossy leaves on all sides and their long prop roots exposed and tangled like the legs of monstrous insects. Working up the winding passage in a tricky current, I realized that I would have to pay attention to tracking, and after sliding sideways around a few bends, I got the knack. We were alone and could have imagined ourselves in some remote backwater of the Amazon if it were not for the occasional numbered trail markers. To dramatize the situation, I had populated the swamp with a variety of sinister river creatures borrowed from Johnny Weissmuller Tarzan movies. When we reached a bend wide enough to turn around in, I suggested returning to Tarpon Bay, where we could do some real paddling. "But it's beautiful here," Barbara said, and of course she was right. I also had a hunch that what we were to remember of that day was in the mangroves and not on Tarpon Bay.

After scraping our way through a channel in the sandbar, we found ourselves at the elbow of a long arm of Mullet Lake. Again, there was a change of scene. The sky had opened up overhead, and we were looking down a winding vista of cabbage palms, palmetto, and stately gumbo limbo trees towering above the mangroves. In the distance, amid a palette of every imaginable shade of green, was the barely discernible graceful line of a white waterbird perched on an invisible limb in a shady recess, the only bird in sight, and the only speck of white in the lush gloaming. The bird was like an artist's highlight in the iris of an eye, which brings a dead visage to life. "Let's rest right here," Barbara suggested. We shipped our paddles and lay still in the slack water. The silence was uncanny and nothing moved, adding to the illusion that the scene before us was an exotic painting, one that is now etched in our memories.

Jim Lacey

Most of my sailing experience has been on traditional displacement hulls, vessels with long, deep keels and lots of ballast way down. They have low freeboard, gently curving bows and sterns that overhang the water and graceful sheers. I've owned three of them, each successively larger. A large part of my pleasure in sailing is due to my satisfaction with this kind of boat. Perhaps my experiences would be of use to readers who are thinking of getting such a boat.

The first I owned was a Bullseye. Designed by the famous Nathanael Herreshoff in 1914, she has been in continuous construction to the present day, with fiberglass versions available since the early nineteen fifties. Mine, a fiberglass example, was built in 1953. I bought her when she was fifteen years old. Like all her sisters, she is 12'6" on the water, 16' overall, the smallest displacement boat available. She has a 6' long cockpit and a small, raised, open cuddy for storage and a wind break. My fiberglass version has a large airtight compartment below the cockpit sole.

I first saw a Bullseye at the New York Boat Show, which I was attending with vague interest and appetite. I didn't know much about boats, but with the Bullseye it was love at first sight. I later learned she was a famous classic, included in most anthologies of good boats. Some people feel she is the most beautiful of Captain Nat's creations. Looking at her would teach me many lessons in the precise, but mysterious, quality called good proportion.

Up to that time, most of my experience had been on a sailing canvas kayak. I had little idea of what to expect from a "stout little ship." I knew I wanted something that would be safe for my family of four small children and justifiably nervous wife, with myself pretty much an ignoramus at sailing. Asking around brought out reassuring stories of the Bullseye's excellent performance in rough weather conditions. My wife and I also got to sail on one, a quiet evening outing, which we found enchanting. Through a broker, and after a survey, we found and bought our first hard skin boat.

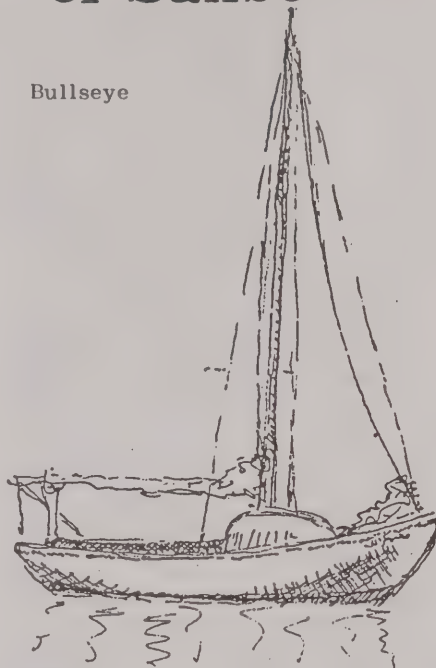
Beginning to sail her on Long Island Sound, I found she had several characteristics which made her a good boat on which to learn. She had definite, but not heavy, weather helm. If I got confused, which was frequent, I would let go of everything and she would head up into the wind, waiting there for me like a patient horse. If a puff caught me unawares, she would heel steeply and spill her wind as she headed up abruptly, sitting there with her sails shivering, waiting for me to collect my wits. Her deep, long, keel gave her great stability, allowing me to climb up to her bows, lean over the lee rail or leave the helm for a few minutes.

She was an excellent heavy weather sailor. Even in winds gusting up to 30 knots, her tiller could be easily handled. In lighter airs, two fingers was sufficient. Under sail in normal weather, her motion was gradual and gentle. She was lively and responsive, capable of sailing close into the wind, and could me in the faintest breeze. In a calm, with the tide against me, I could keep her moving with a canoe paddle.

As time went by, I built up great confidence in my boat, and even some in myself. Bullseye owners frequently feel they own the perfect boat. Such vessels engender a great deal of owner loyalty. I kept mine for 14

Some Thoughts on a Succession of Sailboats

Bullseye



years.

It was when I moved her to the Maine coast, with all its delicious places to cruise to, that I became aware of the shortcomings of a small, open boat. Since a displacement hull's speed is directly proportional to her waterline length, her maximum speed was about 4.75 knots. In practice, over a six-hour period, she had an average speed of about two knots. Not being a very avid camper, the prospect of sleeping in the cockpit with Maine's summer night temperatures dropping into the forties was not enticing, so I felt I had to get back to home port every night.

I began to think of a bigger, faster boat with some sort of cabin in which to go cruising. I had developed a taste for single handed sailing, going off for a few hours or a day by myself. At the time, I felt anything over 25' would be too big for me to handle alone, and to expensive to operate. Because of my happy experience with the Bullseye, I wanted another traditional displacement hull. I felt that a good-looking, traditional hull, somewhat like the Bullseye, would also be seaworthy. My pocketbook precluded all but an old used boat.

I began to spend frozen Saturdays among the shrouded shapes of winterized boats. One cold day, my eye was powerfully attracted by a lithe, 24' sloop that proved to be the Greenwich, designed by George Stadel. She had all the things I had come to value in a boat design, plus a low cabin that complimented the hull form. There were two bunks in the main saloon and a vee berth up in the bows with a head underneath. The vee berth had a removable section to gain access to the head. The galley was located at the companion way, under the main hatch. It had a two-burner alcohol stove, a sink and an ice chest. A few shelves completed the accommodation. The cockpit was the same size as in the Bullseye, and was self-draining. She had a ten-horse outboard for auxiliary power.

The Greenwich was narrow-beamed with a tall, generous sail plan, a combination which indicated a fast sailor. The price was low because there had been some hull damage. I bought her, after a survey that found the flaws weren't serious, and did the repairs myself. A relatively simple matter if it is fiberglass work.

Sailing her, I found many similarities to the Bullseye. My new boat had several added pleasant characteristics. Her drifting motion was surer, making it easier to come up to a mooring or keep moving through a momentary wind loss. As a platform, she was much more stable, making it easier to go forward. I agree with those who say that a boat of this size, about 24', is perhaps the best length for a middle-aged person to learn on. The greater stability and surer inertial movement made her easier to handle than a smaller boat.

I began to do some cruising, 15 to 25 miles a day, at about three knots, under sail, using power occasionally to maneuver in close quarters or to move in a flat calm. As I spent more time in the cabin of my new boat, I began to understand the true meaning of the term "overnighter," particularly for me, who was not past fifty.

Cruising, one night alone was comfortable, two nights a bit confining. Sons and son-in-law, used to camping, were relaxed companions, but my wife found one night enough. No amount of new upholstery, white paint, freshly varnished bright work and new brass lamps could overcome some shortcomings of the cabin. The bunks were set tight against the hull, just below the waterline. Maine's cold waters chilled them very efficiently. Another problem, particularly as I aged, was the discomfort of changing my clothes in a horizontal or sitting position. On a rainy or foggy day, the small, dark cabin's sides and roof sweated, not a luxurious vacation retreat. My pretty little Greenwich was just what she looked like a lively, easily handled daysailor with "overnight" cruising abilities.

Greenwich



Another shortcoming gradually emerged as I sailed into November. As cold air gets denser, there is more power in its wind. A fifteen knot breeze feels like twenty. My boat's big tail rig needed much reefing in order for her to make headway. Her narrow beam meant she was always steeply heeled, with a wet toe rail. I would get quite tired after a few hours of having my feet stiffly braced against the side of the lee cockpit seat. The low cabin and high self-bailing cockpit made for an exposed position at the helm. This made for good visibility, nice on a summer day, but very, very cold beating into a stiff breeze in the fall.

After about five years of the Greenwich, a friend offered to sell me his boat, one I had admired for years. It was the Ranger, a 29'6" sloop designed by Philip Rhodes. She had all of the grace for which the designer is famous. Like my two earlier boats, there was low freeboard, elegant sheer, overhanging ends and, of course, a long keel with lots of ballast. Her rig was designed to be easily handled, with a short mast and small sail areas. Perfect for an aging single hander. She was built in Holland in the early sixties, beautifully crafted with much mahogany bright work and a wooden boom and mast. The hull, deck and cabin are fiberglass.

The cabin design was particularly comfortable. There was a raised roof on the main saloon, which gave 5'11" headroom. There were large windows that let in a great wash of light, making it one of the cheeriest places to be, even in the most dismal weather. I find this configuration to be intriguing, because it could so easily have been ugly. In Rhodes' hands, the proportions of this difficult part of the design are "just right," and one accepts them without any qualms. In the cabin, the bunks had storage bins that kept them from touching the hull itself, making them much warmer. Forward there was a vee berth with made a wide single bed. The two spaces were separated by a hanging locker and a head compartment with solid doors that were arranged to give privacy and much storage. The galley was located near the companionway, as on the Greenwich, but with more working space and storage.

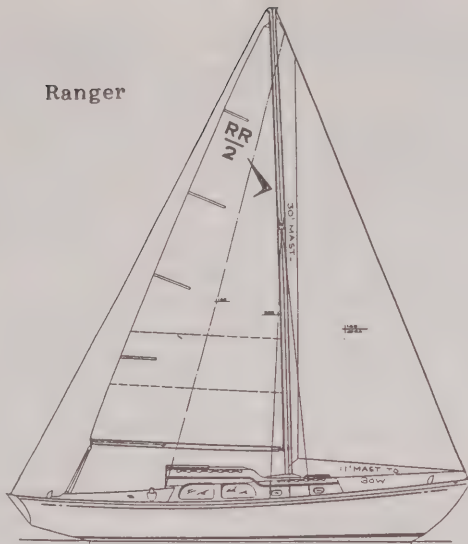
This vessel's length puts her in the lower range of big craft. There are some real differences from my earlier boats. In light airs she is sluggish. Sailing off the mooring, it takes a bit of time for her to track. Close maneuvering requires more precision. Trying to slow her coming onto a dock cost me a boat hook and could have cost me a dislocated shoulder. On the other hand, she doesn't heel as steeply or abruptly in a puff. In a blow, she is much less fatiguing. Sailing all day in winds gusting above 30 knots is exhilarating, not exhausting.

I find I am using the motor much more. I have yet to come on a dock under sail alone. I often go off and on my mooring under power. I sometimes power assist when cruising under sail. When I have a large group of guests who are nervous about sailing, the Ranger is a comfortable, roomy motor boat.

My sailing habits have changed. Long voyages, living aboard, have become more frequent than before. Sailing in a near calm is avoided. I spend time aboard, simply "hanging out," because the cabin is such a nice place to be.

In general, the number of accessories and complication of equipment has increased with

Ranger



the size of my boats. There are now an array of electronics on board, giving the usual frustration on the frequent occasions when they don't work. My cost of operation has also increased. For example, I needed one quart of bottom paint for my Bullseye, the Ranger needs a gallon. Life on board is still simpler than ashore, but not as simple, or as taxing, as on a daysailor.

As a postscript, last year I began sailing a Bullseye again, as well as the Ranger. One for a dap around the harbor, the other for more ambitious ventures. I also use a double paddle canoe, and often row about in one of three dinghys. I find this proliferation of boats is not unusual down here in Maine, where it is relatively inexpensive to keep a boat. Anyway, I think boats are like cats -- one is enchanting, two are no me trouble, etc., etc.

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So what is "Superbrick"? It's a 19'6" x 7'10" live-aboard sailboat with one full-size double berth, two 6'5" transom berths, enclosed head with shower, lots of storage space including two hanging lockers, and standing headroom in the galley. Not only does all this not seem possible, it is hardly imaginable. No wonder it took four years to get off the drawing board. Here is what Bolger says about his design:

"I believe the rig to be perfectly workable (this was one of the holdups), and that the boat will be a very respectable sailer. I do think that handling the rig will take some getting used to and that the builder should plan to work it in very gently, in light airs and smooth seas. The other point is fundamental: This is a very big boat and its compactness does not make it smaller; you don't get fifty pounds down to twenty by rolling it up very tightly. The amount of joinerwork is quite comparable to the AS-29.

Whether it is a good value is

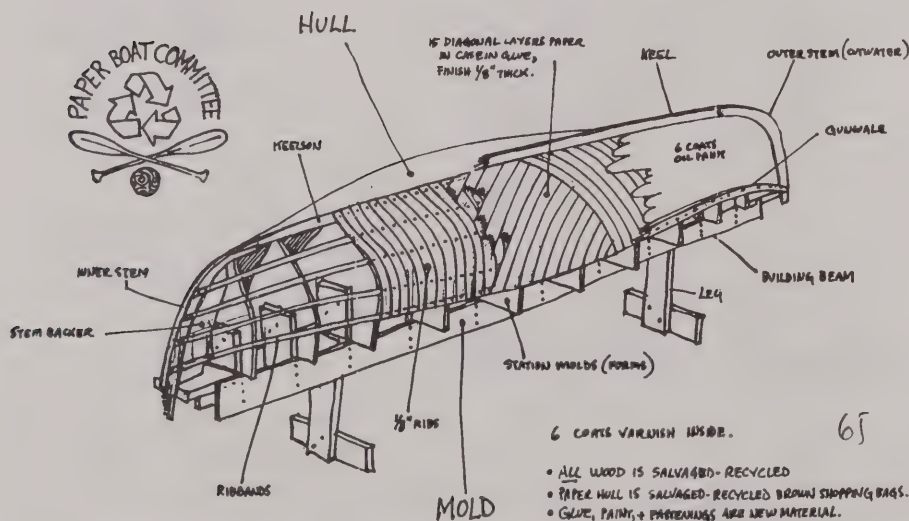
arguable. No doubt it is in some circumstances, but a realistic look at the labor time involved in building the cabin is in order. The facts that it won't fit between the wheels of a trailer, and its height above them, should not be minimized. On the other hand, I don't see how any SEAWORTHY boat with this much cabin could be much cheaper, and it ought to be a spectacular conversation piece."

If you are interested, here is the deal. I will make three sets of "Superbrick" plans available for the introductory price of \$75 to anyone who can give me a REALISTIC timetable for completion of the project. The first one done will receive a refund of \$150 and have the very first "Superbrick" ever. My goal is to get one built to the plans as quickly as is humanly possible.

I will also make the blueprints with the sail plan, top and side views available to anyone interested for \$20. If at a later date anyone buying this decides to go ahead with the project, I will deduct \$20 from the full cost of the building plans.

Bernie Wolfard, Common Sense Designs, P.O. Box 91529-B, Portland, OR 97291-0429.

Recycled Paper Canoe



CONSTRUCTION DIAGRAM OF PAPER CANOE FOR "SAVE THE STRAIT" MARATHON (CUTAWAY VIEW)

DRAWN JUNE 19, 1990 L. WESTLAKE

NOT SHOWN ARE: END DECKS/BREASTHOOKS, THIMBLES, SOLE, ADJUSTABLE SEAT, SAILING RIG

A group of volunteer parents and their kids are building a paper canoe from recycled materials for use in our local "Save the Strait" marathon, a 16 mile crossing of Georgia Strait, scheduled for August 25-26. The canoe is built of recycled materials, excepting paint, glue and fastenings. We use casein glue as it is cheap and made from a renewable resource. We work Sundays 10 to 2, some building, some baby tending, have a potluck lunch and then go home. It will take about 8 weeks to complete.

Each week I put in, as coordinator, about 6-8 hours writing instructions for the various procedures. The boat in progress is cartopped to local fairs, museums, art centers, and building goes on at these public places, kids and all. We sign up pledges at \$1 a mile for the crossing. The money raised is donated to environmental organizations involved in the Save the Strait Alliance, 479 4th St. (2nd Fl.), Courtenay, BC, Canada V9N 1G9.

I will double-paddle the boat across, or use a 30 square foot dipping lug sail if the wind is favorable.

Larry Westlake, Halfmoon Bay, BC, Canada

ADAPTIVE BOAT DESIGNS

"Adaptive Boat Designs" will be a regular column in the *Ocean Access* newsletter. It will be a column intended to share new designs and ideas of boats and related equipment that enhance the accessibility and use of boats.

LAKE & STEPHENS' 20' KAYAKAMARAN

by John A. Lancaster

David Lake and Robert Stephens of Wiscasset, Maine have designed a trimaran kayak, a kayakamaran called Raven's Wing, for disabled individuals. The boat has a lateen rig for a sailing option, seat backrest, and wheelchair storage and tie down. While a version of this craft has yet to be built, David Lake is ready to proceed with construction for a willing buyer.

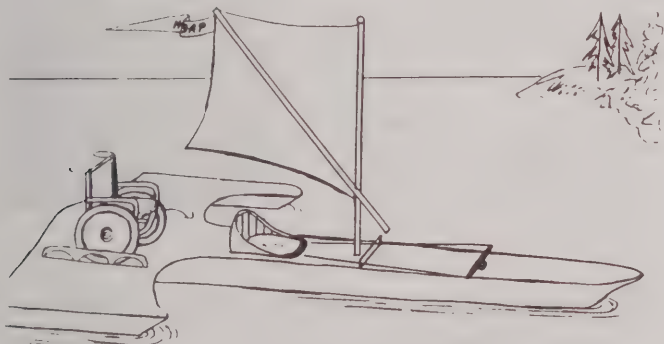
The vessel should have the stability to handle some large sailing rigs, although larger rigs should be placed aft of the cockpit and may hinder access intended over the stern. The little rig forward of the cockpit would be great for downwind idling for the tired paddler.

The seat back would lift off to allow access and then drop in behind you once seated. Velcro seat straps could be utilized if necessary.

The bow rudder will provide for directional control while paddling and keep the bow from blowing down. It will also facilitate turns in tight quarters. The kayaker would put their paddle down adjust the rudder in jam cleats and then resume paddling. For sailing one would control the steering with one hand and the main sheet with the other. A paddling post could easily be added for one armed kayakers.

The kayaker would enter Raven's Wing from the beach over the stern or possibly by ramp from a floating dock. They would lower themselves into the cockpit, tie down their wheelchair or crutches (if they use one or the other), store tent, provisions, fishing gear, etc. on the stern adjacent the chair, and paddle or sail away.

Estimated cost for Raven's Wing is \$1,300. For more information contact John Lancaster, NOAP, Suite 107, 410 Severn Avenue, Annapolis, MD 21403; phone: 301-280-0464. ■



RAVEN'S WING WATERCRAFT
— A 20' KAYAKAMARAN —
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Robert Stephens
David Lake

"Ocean Access", the newsletter for the National Ocean Access group devoted to bringing boating to the physically handicapped, has a column devoted to "adaptive boat designs".

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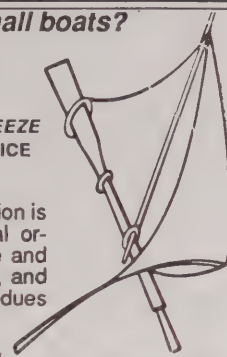
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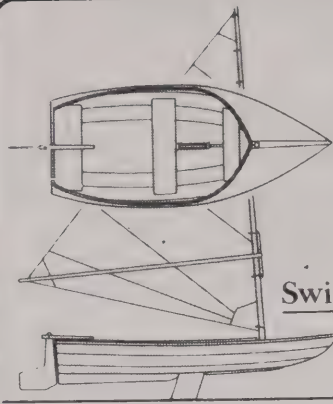
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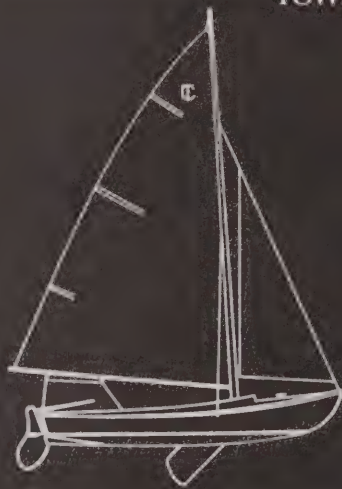


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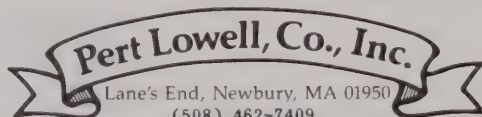
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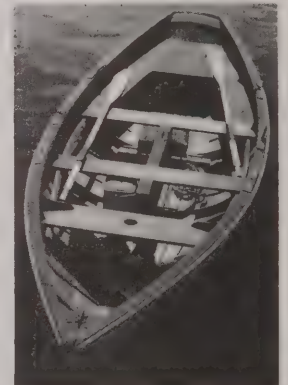
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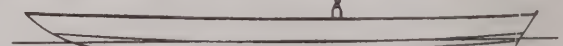


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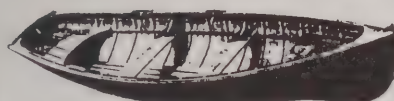
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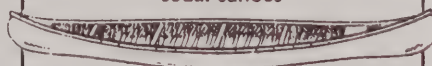
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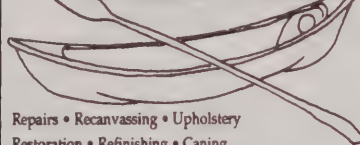


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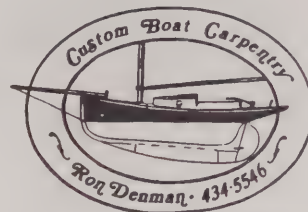
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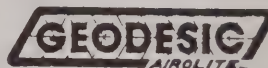
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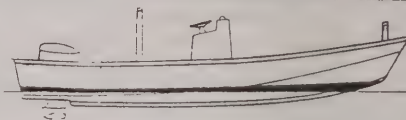
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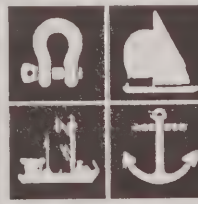
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To sweeten the deal more, Ken has included a four-page plans set for an 8' sailing dinghy you can build. What is most significant about this particular dreambook is the scope of choices of designs and materials offered in one source. The inclusion of the conceptions of fourteen different designers, rather than the usual one of such design catalogs, makes it just about impossible to not find something you like. While I wasn't taken with the 33' "Delta King" cruising houseboat, and found the "South Sea 40" schooner far too large in scale, I was hooked on Sam Devlin's "Surf Scoter" and Weston Farmer's elegant "Elco 26" in the power boat collection, and Ken Hankinson's "Fancy Free" sailing sharpie dory and Sam Devlin's "Winter Wren" gaff sloop from amongst the sailing designs offered.

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